

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

F A C T S H E E T

**APPROVE EXPENDITURES FOR THE SIXTH ANNUAL
CONNECTIONS FOR LIFE THROUGH
EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

Request approval to host and conduct the Sixth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference at the California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities.

REQUEST

Authorize the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to expend funds to conduct the Sixth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference to be held on April 18, 2012, at an estimated total cost of \$15,000, fully funded by Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) revenue; authorize DMH to execute an agreement with the California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities (Endowment) for the conference's catering services at an estimated total cost of \$6,100; authorize DMH to execute an agreement with the California Certified Interpreters for the conference's interpretation services at an estimated total cost of \$2,000; authorize the Director of Mental Health, or his designee, to sign agreements for catering and interpreting services for three subsequent annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conferences through Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15 not to exceed a total maximum per year amount of \$20,000, subject to review and approval by County Counsel and notice to your Board and the Chief Executive Office (CEO).

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION

Approval of these actions will allow DMH to host and conduct the Sixth Annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference to be held on April 18, 2012, at the Endowment. Also, it will allow the Department to host the conference annually for three subsequent fiscal years through FY 2014-15. In support of promoting the wellness and recovery of mental health clients in Los Angeles County, the conference will offer consumers the information and community resources that support their journey to independence and self-determination. This conference also includes an awards ceremony to recognize the successes consumers have achieved in attaining their employment and/or education goals. Furthermore, the monolingual consumers in attendance require Spanish-speaking interpreters.

The conference is required at this time as it supports DMH in accomplishing elements of its State-approved MHSA plans. This conference provides an important opportunity to support the tenet of recovery by offering a learning opportunity to consumers who are reticent to work or attend school because of their mental illness.

BACKGROUND

Since 2007, DMH and the Mental Health Commission have sponsored an annual Connections for Life Through Employment and Education Conference. This conference unites consumers who are employed, volunteering and/or attending school, consumers whose recovery goals include employment and/or education and professionals who work in the employment and education field. This conference supports the tenet of recovery contained in the MHSA.

Connections for Life Through Employment and Education is a truly transformative conference that offers a learning opportunity for consumers who are reticent to work or attend school because of their mental illness. Many of the consumers who attend the conference were gainfully employed or enrolled in school prior to being diagnosed with a serious mental illness. These consumers will learn about the successes other consumers have achieved in attaining their employment and/or education goals. Consumers will also gain a heightened awareness of their employment and/or educational capabilities.

At this conference, consumers will join in a dialogue of hope, recovery and wellness. This unique opportunity will reinforce the power of hope and positive thinking and provide an environment that envisions solutions to the many challenges of having a mental illness.

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